

HARPSWELL BULLETIN

News for Harpswell Residents & Property Owners from the Town Office – May 2005

Town Website: www.harpswell.maine.gov

SAD 75 AND SPECIAL TOWN MEETING VOTE ON JUNE 14

Harpswell voters will vote, as they do each year, on the proposed SAD 75 budget, which goes into effect on July 1. The vote will take place on June 14, 2005 at the Harpswell Town Office from 9 a.m. until 8 p.m. The proposed budget includes a major increase for Harpswell, so it is important that you study the complex ballot and then vote. For more information, please call the M.S.A.D. # 75 Superintendent's Office at 729-9961.

At the time of the SAD 75 vote, the Selectmen have placed an item on the ballot for Town consideration. Voters will be asked to allow Selectmen the authority to make the Harbormaster position a full-time one. The article reads: To see if the Town will vote (1) to authorize the Selectmen to provide for improved control, coverage and supervision by the Harbormaster, including the possibility of employing the Harbormaster on a full-time basis, at a cost not to exceed \$28,000 annually, plus usual employee benefits and (2) to appropriate from undesignated fund balance the necessary funds for this purpose. In the interim, Deputy Harbormaster Jim Hays will handle harbor and waterfront issues.

GOVERNANCE

At the March Annual Town Meeting, only 31 percent of voters supported a Charter Commission. On the basis of this vote, the Selectmen have decided not to create a Governance Committee. However, they will prepare an information brochure, explaining Harpswell Town government. In addition, they seek suggestions on any matters that Harpswell residents may have had in mind for consideration by a Charter Commission such as the role of Committees, ethics, elected officials, opportunities for public comments. These suggestions will be considered and may lead to proposals for changes in procedures, policies or ordinances.

PROPERTY TAXES: ASSESSING VISITS

As most Harpswell people know, the Town is currently undergoing a revaluation of all lots and structures in order to bring property tax valuations into a more uniform and current basis. With the rapid increase in Town value resulting from the growth in amounts paid when real property changes hands, it is essential that Harpswell bring its valuation more nearly into line with the state valuation used for the purposes of our SAD 75 and county tax contributions.

The revaluation, carried out with the assistance of Vision, a leading valuation service company, requires that each structure be valued separately. Vision may not rely on the Town's current data. For that reason, it is most important that Vision be able to see the exterior and interior of each structure. At this time, the interiors of many residences have not yet been inspected. It is in the property owner's interest to have such an inspection. Without it, their homes may be valued incorrectly. If you received a notice from Vision in March to arrange for an interior inspection and have not yet responded, Vision will be mailing you another notice in June. To schedule an interior inspection prior to June, please call 207-833-6302. If you are unsure if the building has been inspected, just call to check.

GRANT PROGRAMS

The Codes Enforcement Office currently administers two grant programs funded by the State of Maine Department of Environmental Protection—(1) Above Ground Heating Tank Replacement and (2) Overboard Discharge Removal. Additionally, the Town is in the process of developing a combination loan/grant program, already approved by the Town Meeting, for the replacement of failed septic systems.

Above Ground Heating Tank Replacement Grant

If you have an older fuel tank that may be pitted, leaking or leaning, please contact the Codes Enforcement Office at 833-5771. The tank will be inspected and if deemed to need replacing, it will be done at little or no cost to the homeowner. The objective of this State grant program is to prevent groundwater contamination. Because of Harpswell's thin soils and rocky ledges and the active pursuit by our Codes Office of these funds, the Town has benefited greatly from this on-going grant program.

Overboard Discharge Removal

At about the time the State enacted a prohibition on the installation of overboard discharge (OBD) systems and the replacement of existing overboard discharge systems (circa 1989), it established a grant program to assist homeowners in replacing those systems with approved ones. Since Harpswell is one of the municipalities in Maine with the largest number of overboard discharges, it has been the fortunate recipient of considerable State funding, administered through the Codes Enforcement Office, for overboard discharge replacement. The Codes Office has been very active in identifying systems that qualify for replacement and working with Harpswell homeowners to utilize available grants.

New Program

The Town is developing a combination loan and grant program that will target replacement of failed septic systems that are not overboard discharge systems. The Town plans to apply the same standards as those previously applied under the Small Community Grant Program. This program is being designed to assist low-income homeowners who have failed systems needing immediate replacement. Please contact the Codes Enforcement Office for more information.

RAINWATER COLLECTORS

The Harpswell Conservation Commission is encouraging rainwater collection for summer garden watering needs. A limited supply of clean, used bait barrels are available for easy conversion to rain barrels.

Harpswell's groundwater supplies are limited in places from over-withdrawals, especially in summer when water tables are low, the population is high and gardens need watering. Collected rain can save precious potable water from being used for irrigation. Some commercial rain barrels sell for over \$100 a piece; however homemade rain barrels can be adapted from used bait barrels with less than \$10 in parts and a little handiwork.

A limited supply of rain collecting barrels are available until June 1, 2005. Contact Conservation Commission member Bob Waddle (725-6222) for more information. The instructions for conversion are available on the Town's website or from Bob when you pick-up your barrel.

DEDICATION CEREMONY

The Town plans to hold a dedication ceremony on Thursday, May 26, 11:00 a.m., at the Recycling Center to unveil the new sign for the Dennis Moore Recycling Center and Transfer Station in honor of long-time Town employee Dennis Moore who passed away on February 23, 2005. Please join us as we pay tribute to this dedicated employee who worked for the Town of Harpswell at its Recycling Center for over 25 years.

PLEASE RECYCLE

Harpswell has long been a leader in recycling in Maine. As recently as 2003, Harpswell produced the second best recycling percentage rate (76%) of the three hundred plus communities reporting to the State Planning Office. According to a recently published report from the State Planning Office, Harpswell has slipped to a recycling rate of 66% for the year 2004, down 10% from the previous year. The volume of waste received in 2004 did not increase, remaining constant at approximately 3,300 tons. We have identified the problem and now appeal to you, the users of this facility, to work with us to turn this trend around.

The compactors located at the Recycling Center continue to be the biggest contributor to the decline in recycling numbers. The amount of Paper, Cardboard, Plastic, Cans, Bottles, Metal & Wood deposited in these compactors is estimated to exceed 350 tons annually. When related to costs for disposal and lost revenues from potential sale of those materials, there is little doubt as to where the problem is. 350 tons of misplaced material equals 10 percent of total volume. If the material is recyclable, it accounts for the percentage drop in our recycling rate. Depositing dry material as opposed to heavier wet material will also save the Town money.

The next time you visit the Recycling Center, take a look around, this facility is clearly labeled with appropriate information as to "what goes where." We also try to have an attendant available to answer questions at all times. Be careful not to discard recyclable material in the compactors. If you observe anyone doing so, please bring it to an attendant's attention. Additional signage will be installed on the compactors to help educate the public, especially new arrivals and summer visitors.

Brochures are available at the Town Office and Recycling Center to answer many of your recycling questions. Pick one up. Let us work together to improve our recycling effort, we have eight months remaining this year to make a difference.

CAPITAL ROAD PROJECT

The 2005 capital road project is now underway. The following roads will be significantly reconstructed and newly paved: Pinkham Point, Stevens Corner, Eggemoggin, Aucocisco, and South Dyer's Cove all on Great Island; and Ocean Street on Bailey Island. Pursuant to the contract, Pinkham Point Road will be substantially completed on or before June 17 with all other remaining roadwork to be completed by late summer. Improved ditching and drainage is a major component of the reconstruction effort.

SEALER OF WEIGHTS & MEASURES

If you use an instrument to determine weight, measurement or count in the performance of commercial activity, please contact the Town Office so the Sealer of Weights & Measures may be duly informed. Scales or gas pumps are prime examples.

MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCES

The Town's annual Memorial Day observances will take place on Monday, May 30, 11:00 a.m. at Harpswell Center. A parade, starting on Route 123 at the juncture with Lookout Point and ending at the northern terminus of Allen Point Road, as well as a guest speaker and bagpiper will be part of the observances. All are urged to join in this Town-wide event to honor and remember those who have served our country, especially those who lost their lives doing so.

MOORING RENEWALS

All currently approved moorings must be paid for annually by June 1. Please submit your payment to the Town Clerk's Office by mail at P.O. Box 39, Harpswell, Maine 04079 or in person, 263 Mountain Road, at the Town Office.

SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAMS

- Red Cross Swim Lessons at Bowdoin College—June 20 – July 1
- Camp Harpswell at Harpswell Islands School—June 27 – July 1
- Kayaking at H2O Outfitters on Orr's Island—July 5 – 9
- Digital Photography Workshops at the Town Office—July 12&13, Aug. 9&10;16&17
- Pastel Painting Classes at the Town Office—July 16, 17, 18, 19
- Music Mini-Camps for ages 1- 4 and 4 - 7 at Bowdoin College—June, July & August

For information, check the Town's website at www.harpswell.maine.gov or call 833-5771.

MACKEREL COVE CLEAN-UP

The Town seeks the cooperation of those who have boats and fishing gear stored on Town property at Mackerel Cove to have those items removed from the site no later than July 1. Boats and fishing gear may be stored in the designated area from October 15 to July 1.